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Source: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Jan., 1981), pp. 1-14

Published by: the [Modern Humanities Research Association](#) and [University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4208189>

Accessed: 15/06/2014 23:03

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THE SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN REVIEW

Volume 59, Number 1 — January 1981

Some Aspects of the Byzantine Tradition in the Rumanian Principalities

D. J. DELETANT

It would be an impossible task to present here in detail all aspects of the Byzantine heritage in the culture of the Rumanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The adoption of Byzantine civilization by the educated is not a simple phenomenon that can be conveniently dismissed in terms of 'slavish imitation' of a superior culture. Several of its features were adapted to suit native needs, as is evident from the reception of, for example, Byzantine law, and this is true not only of the principalities but also of other parts of south-eastern Europe. To distinguish the indigenous from the borrowed is, at times, almost impossible because of the absence of a comparative framework within which the scholar can work. In respect of artistic traditions there is continual debate as to whether one can talk of native schools in describing the art of medieval Rumania, or Bulgaria, or Serbia. Nevertheless, some distinctions and conclusions can be drawn regarding the Byzantine tradition in Rumanian cultural history and it is these which will be discussed here.

The church and culture of Byzantium were to dominate Wallachia and Moldavia (called respectively Ungrovlachia and Moldovlachia by the Byzantine chancellery) soon after some form of political organization was established in the two principalities. The first is considered to have been founded in 1330 by the ruler Basarab I.¹

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¹ C. G. Giurescu, D. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri pînă astăzi*, 2nd edn, Bucharest, 1975, pp. 204–8.

It comprised the land that was later to be called Wallachia as well as the southern part of the area between the Dniester and the Pruth with the fortress of Cetatea Albă (Akkerman). The establishment of Moldavia took place in 1359, its frontiers being the Dniester in the east and the territory of Basarab in the south. The same year provides the first well-attested date in the history of the Rumanian Church. Following several requests from the prince Nicolae Alexandru (1352–64) to the Patriarch of Constantinople, a metropolitan of Wallachia was appointed with his see at Argeş, the prince's capital.² The first incumbent was Iachint, formerly Metropolitan of Vicina (whose site is thought to be the modern Isaccea on the Danube). In Moldavia it was almost half a century later that the first metropolitan was appointed. The prince Petru Muşat persuaded the Orthodox Metropolitan of Halicz in Poland to consecrate two bishops of Moldavia, one of whom was Iosif, a relative of the prince. However, the Patriarch of Constantinople Antonios refused to recognize Iosif as metropolitan since he wished to appoint a Greek. It necessitated a change of prince and patriarch before Iosif was finally confirmed in 1401 as metropolitan in Suceava, the residence of the Moldavian princes.³ With the establishment of an organized Orthodox Church in the principalities it was not long before successive Rumanian princes began the practice of founding monasteries and dedicating them to Mount Athos and the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem. Many Greek monks came to the principalities to administer the land and wealth of these foundations between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and during the Phanariot period in particular (1711–1821) they brought many Greek manuscripts and books.

In Transylvania the Rumanians could not have an organized church, since the pope urged the kings of Hungary to suppress schismatics. The title of the Metropolitan of Wallachia, 'Exarch of Hungary and the Mountains', bears witness to the fact that there was no Orthodox metropolitan of Transylvania. Even in 1571 the Transylvanian Diet gave Orthodoxy only the status of a 'tolerated' religion, the 'received religions' being Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian.⁴

What little is known about the organization of Rumanian monasteries in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries shows contact with the Byzantine church. It is probable that a

² *Documente privind Istoria României. B. Țara Românească, veacul XIII, XIV, și XV (1247–1500)*, Bucharest, 1953, pp. 13–14.

³ M. Păcurariu, *Istoria bisericii ortodoxe române*, Sibiu, 1972, pp. 61–63.

⁴ E. D. Tappe, 'The Rumanian Orthodox Church and the West', in *Studies in Church History*, vol. 13: *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. by D. Baker, Oxford, 1976, p. 281.

notable influence in Rumanian monasticism was that of Hesychasm. The Hesychast movement is associated with the revival of contemplative monasticism inspired by the Byzantine ascetic Gregory of Sinai. About 1330 he founded a monastic community in the Paroria region of south-eastern Bulgaria. The monastery attracted many disciples from the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria and Serbia and was, after Mount Athos, the principal centre of Hesychasm in the Balkans. A Bulgarian disciple of Gregory, St Theodosius of Trnovo, founded a new monastery at Kilifarevo near his native town in about 1350 and it was from here that Hesychasm probably spread to the Rumanian principalities.⁵ Mount Athos itself contributed to this influence, one of its monasteries, Koutloumousiou, having received a gift of money from the Wallachian Prince Nicolae Alexandru for the construction of some buildings.⁶ In 1372 the abbot of this monastery, Chariton, became Metropolitan of Wallachia. However, the most important Hesychast link with Wallachia was provided by the monk Nicodemus. Born in Serbia of a Serbian mother and Greek father, he went to Mount Athos for his training and came to Wallachia during the reign of Vladislav, with whose support he founded the monastery of Vodița (c. 1369–74). In 1385 his second foundation, Tismana, was completed.⁷ Nicodemus maintained links with other Hesychasts in the Balkans, corresponding with Euthymius, patriarch of Trnovo, and others and was the embodiment of what might be termed the cosmopolitan Byzantine culture of the period. In Moldavia Hesychast influence is reflected in some of the manuscripts of the country's oldest and greatest monastery Neamțu, founded during the reign of Petru Mușat (1375–91). The *Lestvica* (Ladder) of John Climacus (John of Sinai) and the discourses of Gregory of Sinai were amongst the works copied there during the fifteenth century.⁸

Byzantine civilization began to penetrate north of the Danube in a late medieval Slavonic form during the fifteenth century. The language through which Byzantine culture was received in the Rumanian principalities was Church Slavonic. Literature in this language is first thought to have spread from Bulgaria and Serbia to Wallachia and Moldavia as early as the eleventh century. With the

⁵ E. Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare du XIV^e siècle et sa diffusion dans les pays roumains*, Paris, 1947, pp. 34–38. For details of the Hesychast movement see J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Paris, 1959.

⁶ H. Mihăescu, 'Trois documents athonites du XIV^e siècle comportant des références à la Valachie' (*Revue des études sud-est européennes*, tome XV, no. 3, Bucharest, 1977, p. 453).

⁷ *Documentele Țării Românești*, ed. by P. P. Panaitescu, vol. 1: *Documente interne (1369–1490)*, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 38–40.

⁸ E. Turdeanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

establishment of the two principalities and of the Rumanian Orthodox Church, Church Slavonic became the language of the chancellery and of the liturgy and thus gained an impetus that sustained it in these lands until the middle of the seventeenth century. The ceremonial at court and the organization of the church followed the Byzantine model, including the nomenclature. Through the medium of Church Slavonic such nouns as *comis*, *logofăt*, *spătar*, *vistiernic*, *egumen*, *evanghelie*, *iconostas*, *mitropolit* and *schit* later became established in the Rumanian language. Church Slavonic, as the language of the educated and of the nobility, enjoyed a prestige in Moldavia and Wallachia similar to that of Latin in the West. Literature in the language, until the second half of the fifteenth century, consisted almost entirely of translations from Byzantine Greek and of works from South Slavonic sources. The earliest significant native work was a chronicle of Moldavian history, covering the years 1504–51, compiled in Church Slavonic by Macarie, bishop of Roman (1531–58).⁹ Translations of the church offices were required for the conduct of worship and even before the creation of the Wallachian and Moldavian sees, a Church Slavonic liturgy that was monastic in character existed in the Rumanian lands. The sources of early Rumanian missals and prayer-books written in Church Slavonic were Byzantine *euchologia* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁰ Numerous manuscript Gospels in Church Slavonic are to be found in the library of the Rumanian Academy together with other texts essential to the service, and also patristic literature.¹¹ For everyday enjoyment there was a copious supply of saints' lives and chronicles, including those of George the Monk (Hamartolos)¹² and Constantin Manasses.¹³ The influence of the latter was particularly strong in Macarie's chronicle, mentioned above.¹⁴ Besides the official Church literature there appeared many stories and legends that correspond to the fiction of today. The most popular tale was the romance of Alexander the Great, a Serbian version of which was copied in 1562 at the Neamțu monastery,¹⁵ whilst among the stories of a didactic nature the most significant was *Barlaam and Josaphat*, based on the life of Buddha. A fifteenth-century manuscript of this tale in a Middle

⁹ *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ion Bogden*, ed. by P. P. Panaitescu, Bucharest, 1959, pp. 74–105.

¹⁰ R. R. Constantinescu, 'The Oldest Liturgy of the Rumanian Church' (*Rumanian Studies*, vol. II, 1971–72, ed. by K. Hitchins, Leiden, 1973, pp. 124–25).

¹¹ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele slave din Biblioteca Academiei R.P.R.*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1959, passim.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1940, p. 22.

¹⁴ E. Turdeanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–32.

¹⁵ N. Cartoian, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, vol. I: *Epoca influenței sud-slave*, Bucharest, 1929, p. 216.

Bulgarian redaction was found in the library of the Neamțu monastery (now Slavonic MS 132 in the Rumanian Academy library).¹⁶

The reign of Alexander the Good (1400–32) in Moldavia is particularly notable for a period of artistic excellence inspired by Byzantine influence. At the instigation of the metropolitan Macarie, who was probably a Greek,¹⁷ a splendid epitaphios with a Greek inscription was embroidered in 1428.¹⁸ A year later at the request of Alexander's wife, Princess Marina, the scribe Gavril copied a Gospels in Slavonic at the monastery of Neamțu. The miniatures in this manuscript, which is now in the Bodleian library in Oxford, clearly owe their inspiration to a Byzantine model.¹⁹

A collection of Byzantine law that enjoyed great authority in Moldavia and Wallachia was the *Syntagma*, compiled in Thessalonica in 1335 by Matthew Blastares. Designed for the use of the clergy, it contained material from St Sava's *Nomocanon* and from secular law-books such as the *Basilica*.²⁰ A manuscript of the *Syntagma* was copied at Neamțu in a Middle Bulgarian redaction in 1472.²¹

Early Rumanian art and architecture were greatly indebted to Byzantium. The two outstanding Wallachian churches of the fourteenth century are the St Nicholas church at Curtea de Argeș, the prince's seat, and the church of the Cozia monastery. The former, begun about 1352 and completed during the reign of Vladislav (1364–77), contains a series of Palaeologan frescoes that is unique in the Rumanian lands. It has been suggested that some of the frescoes were inspired by similar scenes in the church of St Saviour (1310–20) in the Chora monastery in Constantinople.²² Cozia, completed about 1390 in the style of the North Serbian churches of the period, contains some fine Byzantine painting in its narthex.²³ The monasteries

¹⁶ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele slave* . . . , p. 160.

¹⁷ Macarie's successor, Damian, was also a Greek, as was Ioachim who followed Damian in 1447.

¹⁸ E. Turdeanu, 'La Broderie religieuse en Roumanie: Les epitaphios moldaves aux XV-e et XVI-e siècles', in *Cercetări literare publicate de N. Cartojan*, iv, Bucharest, 1940, pp. 173–75.

¹⁹ The Greek text was added later: id., 'The Oldest Illuminated Moldavian MS' (*The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. xxix, no. 73, London, 1951, p. 465).

²⁰ D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London, 1974, p. 410.

²¹ P. P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele slave* . . . , no. 131, p. 158. The *Syntagma* was also copied in 1495 by the scribe Damian at Iași (see E. Turdeanu, 'L'Activité littéraire en Moldavie à l'époque d'Étienne le Grand (1457–1504)' (*Revue des études roumaines*, v–vi, Paris, 1960, p. 45)); by Macarie, bishop of Roman, in 1554 (see D. P. Bogdan, *Paleografia româno-slavă*, Bucharest, 1978, p. 112), and by Anastasie Crimca, Metropolitan of Moldavia, in 1611 (see E. Turdeanu, 'Le Métropolitain Anastase Crimca et son œuvre littéraire et artistique (1608–1629)' (*Revue des études slaves*, vol. 29, Paris, 1952, pp. 59–60).

²² M. A. Musicescu, G. Ionescu, *The Princely Church of Curtea de Argeș*, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 20–21.

²³ N. Ghika-Budești, 'L'Ancienne Architecture religieuse de la Valachie' (*Bulletin de la Commission des monuments historiques de Roumanie*, vol. xxxv, Bucharest, 1942, p. 12).

and churches of Moldavia are more original in form, the reign of Stephen the Great (1457–1504) marking the golden age of medieval Rumanian architecture. The complete external decoration of the monasteries of Humor (1535), Moldovița (1537), Arbore (1541), Voroneț (1547), and Sucevița (1595–96) with frescoes is unique in South-East Europe.

The bulk of the Byzantine–Slavonic literature mentioned above was translated into Rumanian during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Several liturgical books were printed in Rumanian at Brașov by Deacon Coresi during the period 1561–81. The *Ladder* of John Climacus was translated in 1618 by Varlaam, abbot of Secu monastery (later Metropolitan of Moldavia between 1632 and 1653),²⁴ while an adaptation in Rumanian of the chronicle of Manasses was made by the Oltenian monk Mihail Moxa in 1620.²⁵ From the same year dates the earliest Rumanian manuscript of the Alexander legend, copied in Transylvania by the priest Ion Românu. Barlaam and Josaphat was first translated into Rumanian by the Wallachian boyar Udriște Năsturel in 1648.²⁶

The fall of Constantinople and the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans left the Rumanian principalities in a unique position. Though vassals of the Porte, their princes retained their autonomy and, as the only remaining Christian rulers in south-eastern Europe, assumed the role of defenders of Orthodox Christianity in the Balkans. During the seventeenth century they followed the spiritual and cultural traditions of Byzantium by encouraging Greek literature, by sheltering Greek prelates, and by patronizing churches and monasteries throughout the Balkans and the Near East. This new cultural centre with its twin capitals of Bucharest (after 1654 when the prince moved his seat from Țirgoviște) and Iași, appropriately described as 'Byzance après Byzance' by Nicolae Iorga,²⁷ began to flourish during the reigns of Matei Basarab (1632–54) in Wallachia and Vasile Lupu (1634–53) in Moldavia.

As a patron of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans Matei Basarab followed the example of Neagoe Basarab, Prince of Wallachia from 1512 to 1521. Matei himself made numerous endowments to churches in Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and its islands. He built the church of St Petka at Vidin and he made gifts in favour

²⁴ G. Ghibănescu, *O nouă lucrare a mitropolitului Varlaam (Leastăita lui Ioan Scarariul)*, extras din Arhiva, Iași, 1915, 37 pp.

²⁵ A later Greek chronicle or chronograph, compiled and published in Venice in 1650 by Matthew Tzigalas, was translated directly into Rumanian only a few years later by a Moldavian, Pătrașco Danovici; see D. Russo, *Studii istorice greco-române 1*, Bucharest, 1939, pp. 89–95.

²⁶ N. Cartoian, *Cărțile populare . . .*, p. 232.

²⁷ N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucharest, 1935.

of the monasteries of Sopocani, Studenica, Papratije and Trebinje.²⁸ His wife Elena made gifts of money to a number of Athonite monasteries.²⁹

The press, brought by Matei in 1635 from Peter Mogila, Metropolitan of Kiev, and established at Cîmpulung, together with that which functioned at Govora, produced some fifteen service-books for the use of the Rumanians and the Slavs; the Slavonic editions are to be found throughout south-eastern Europe.³⁰ That the Church Slavonic Psalter printed at Govora in Oltenia in 1637 was destined for the Orthodox peoples of the Balkans is clear from its preface, signed by Meletie the Macedonian, abbot of Govora, who dedicated the book to 'the devout people of our land and to other peoples who are related to us by faith and by the same well-known Slavonic tongue, and in particular to the Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Wallachians, the Moldavians and the others'.³¹

Among the numerous Greek clerics and scholars who settled in Wallachia at this period were Dionysios Comnenos, secretary to Matei and later patriarch of Constantinople, Panteleimon (Paisios) Ligaridis and Ignatios Petritzis, who founded a Graeco-Latin college at Tîrgoviște in 1646,³² and the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria, Paisios and Mitrophanes respectively.

More neo-Byzantine in character was the reign of Matei's contemporary in Moldavia, Vasile Lupu. The latter did not limit himself to endowing monasteries in Serbia and Croatia,³³ but even paid off the debts of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.³⁴ He raised the prestige of his country in the Orthodox world by presiding, in true Byzantine fashion, over a synod of the Orthodox Church convened at Iași in 1642 at which both the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Metropolitan of Kiev were represented. The conclusions of the synod were printed at Iași in Greek in the same year under the title 'The Synodal Decree of the Patriarch Partenios',

²⁸ E. Turdeanu, 'Din vechile schimburi culturale dintre români și jugoslavi' (*Cercetări literare publicate de N. Cartoian*, III, Bucharest, 1939, p. 173). See also M. Beza, *Urme românești în răsăritul ortodox*, Bucharest, 1937, pp. 26, 51.

²⁹ T. Bodogae, *Ajutoarele românești la mănăstirile din Sfîntul Munte Athos*, Sibiu, 1940, pp. 98-99.

³⁰ E. Turdeanu, 'Legăturile românești cu mănăstirile Hilandar și Sfântul Pavel de la Muntele Athos' (*Cercetări literare publicate de N. Cartoian*, IV, Bucharest, 1940, p. 89).

³¹ I. Bianu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche I*, Bucharest, 1903, pp. 104-6. This dedication is modelled closely on the preface to the *Euchologion* (*Molitvelnic*) printed at Cîmpulung in 1635 which is generally attributed to Udriște Năsturel: see D. H. Mazilu, *Udriște Năsturel*, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 99, 288.

³² A. Camariano-Cioran, *Les Académies principières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs*, Thessaloniki, 1974, pp. 21-22.

³³ E. Turdeanu, 'Din vechile schimburi . . .', p. 175.

³⁴ These amounted to 300 purses: see C. Mango, 'The Phanariots and the Byzantine Tradition', in *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, ed. by R. Clogg, London, 1973, p. 64, note 45.

the press having been recently established on the initiative of Vasile Lupu who had written to Peter Mogila, Metropolitan of Kiev, requesting his aid in this respect. The Metropolitan sent a press and Greek type was supplied by the press of the Orthodox brotherhood in Lvov.³⁵ In 1640 Vasile founded a college at Iași in the grounds of the Trei Ierarhi church, the site of his press. Instruction was given in Latin and Greek but the school's existence was short-lived.³⁶ The esteem in which Vasile came to be held in the Orthodox world is reflected in the panegyric addressed to the prince by Athanasios Patelaros, Patriarch of Constantinople, who styled him as 'the living successor to the emperors who formerly reigned in Byzantium'.³⁷

The Principalities continued to play an outstanding role in the diffusion of Orthodox culture during the second half of the seventeenth century. In Wallachia the princes Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–88) and Constantin Brîncoveanu (1688–1714) saw themselves as patrons of a Greek renaissance. The former founded a Greek academy at Bucharest, although in which year is uncertain. Whether, as has often been claimed, Germanos Locros, archbishop of Nyssa, who is mentioned in the preface of the Rumanian Bible printed at Bucharest in 1688, was a teacher at this school is not clear. What is now established is that the academy was reorganized by Brîncoveanu, who appointed Sevastos Kyminitis, formerly head of the academy in Constantinople, as director in 1689 and increased the budget.³⁸ Such was the Bucharest academy's fame that it attracted students from throughout the Hellenic East, but Brîncoveanu himself preferred to recruit private tutors for his sons. The first of these was George Maiotas, a Cretan, followed, in 1712, by Anastasios Bounelis, a native of Jannina. The prince engaged Ioannes Comnenos, former tutor to the son of Gheorghe Duca, Prince of Moldavia (1678–83), as his doctor (later Comnenos was appointed Metropolitan of Dristra (Silistra) in Northern Bulgaria).³⁹ In 1707 Brîncoveanu reorganized the academy a second time, after writing for guidance to Chrysanthemos Notaras, patriarch of Jerusalem, under whose patronage the academy was placed.⁴⁰

The creation of the Bucharest Academy and the reputation that it acquired, and also, no doubt, the old rivalry between the two principalities, led the Prince of Moldavia, Antioh Cantemir, to

³⁵ M. Tomescu, *Istoria cărții românești*, Bucharest, 1968, p. 66.

³⁶ A. Camariano-Cioran, op. cit., p. 84.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 33.

³⁹ O. Cicanci, P. Cernovodeanu, 'Contribution à la connaissance de la biographie et de l'œuvre de Jean (Hierotheé) Comnène (1668–1719)' (*Balkan Studies*, xii, no. 1, Thessaloniki, 1971, pp. 143–86).

⁴⁰ A. Camariano-Cioran, op. cit., p. 37, note 64.

found a similar institution in his capital in 1707 during his second reign.⁴¹ It was given a solid foundation only in 1714 when the then prince Nicolaos Mavrocordatos profited from the presence of Chrysanthemos Natoras in Wallachia to invite him to reorganize it. Greek teachers were also employed by the princes of Moldavia for the education of their sons. Dimitrie Cantemir studied under the monk Jeremias Kakavelas and the future Metropolitan of Athens, Meletios, while Cantemir in his turn appointed Athanasios Contoidis as tutor to his children. Dimitrie's brother Antioch chose Azarios Tzigalas to fulfil this role.

That the Rumanian princes may justifiably be considered the champions of Orthodoxy is evident from the number of dogmatic and polemical works directed against the Catholics and Calvinists, written by Greek scholars and printed at Iași and Bucharest, often at the expense of the Moldavian and Wallachian hospodars. Examples of these are *A Contestation of the Primacy of the Pope* by Nectarios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, printed in 1682; *Against Heresies* by Simeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica, printed in 1683; *Manual against Ioannes Caryophyllis* by Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, printed in 1694; *Volume on the Reconciliation*, a compilation of mainly fifteenth-century texts made by the same Dositheos and printed in stages between 1692 and 1694; and a *Volume of Love against the Papists*, also by Dositheos and printed in 1698. The first two of these works came from the Greek press of the monastery of Cetățuia in Iași, founded in 1682 by the dynamic Patriarch Dositheos who supervised its activity. This press ceased to function in 1686 and a new press was active elsewhere in Iași between 1692 and 1698.⁴² The destruction or abandonment of the Cetățuia press led Dositheos to request Brîncoveanu to establish a press in Bucharest. Attached to the metropolitan church, it too printed several Orthodox polemical works in Greek: *Refutation of the Calvinist Principles and the Questions of Cyril Lucaris* by Meletios Syrigos and the *Handbook against the Calvinist Deviation* by the Patriarch Dositheos appeared under one cover in 1690. This same press, under the supervision of the monk Antim Ivireanul, later metropolitan of Wallachia, also produced a number of service-books including a fine Greek-Rumanian Gospels in juxtaposed columns in 1693.

Antim's activity as a printer demonstrates the generosity of his patron Brîncoveanu towards the rest of the Orthodox fraternity.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 86.

⁴² E. Turdeanu, 'Le Livre grec en Russie: l'apport des presses de Moldavie et de Valachie (1682-1725)' (*Revue des études slaves*, vol. xxvi, Paris, 1950, p. 75).

⁴³ A description of Antim's activity as a printer is to be found in N. Șerbănescu, 'Antim Ivireanul tipograf' (*Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, lxxiv (1956), nos. 8-9, Bucharest, pp. 690-752).

About 1700 the latter was visited by Athanasios Dabbas, Patriarch of Antioch, who requested the prince's practical support in printing service-books in Arabic. At Brîncoveanu's behest Antim, since 1694 the abbot of the Monastery of the Virgin Mother at Snagov, cut the necessary Arabic type and printed there a Liturgy in Greek and Arabic in 1701. In the following year, with the same type, he produced a Greek-Arabic Book of Hours at Bucharest. The patriarch was allowed to take the type with him to Aleppo where he continued to produce books in Arabic until his death in 1724.⁴⁴ An apprentice of Antim, Mihail Ștefan, was sent by Brîncoveanu to Georgia in about 1706 at the request of its ruler Vachtang who wished to set up a press. Antim himself was a native of Georgia (Ivria) and no doubt gave counsel to his prince in this respect. With the aid of craftsmen from Wallachia Mihail founded a press at Tbilisi and in 1709 printed a Gospels in Georgian, using the native alphabet. In the preface to the book he styled himself Mihail Stepanesvili, that is, the son of Ștefan. Between 1709 and 1711 the press produced some ten works and was active until 1722 when it was destroyed by Turkish invaders.⁴⁵

Brîncoveanu's reign, which lasted a quarter of a century, his munificent sponsorship of Greek culture and his generous patronage of Orthodoxy, gave Wallachia an unrivalled prestige in the Hellenic world and the Greeks the hope of a revived Byzantium. Within two years of Brîncoveanu's death the thrones of both Moldavia and Wallachia were occupied by Phanariot Greek princes, appointed by the Turks, and throughout the eighteenth century they applied a policy of Hellenization in the Danubian principalities, as they now came to be called by western observers.

Phanariot was the name given to members of the Greek oligarchy of Constantinople who resided in the Phanar district of that city. They owed their wealth and privileges either to commerce or to service in the Ottoman administration. A number of Phanariots rose to the highest positions in the Ottoman civil service, the first being Panayotis Nikousios who was Grand Dragoman, or Grand Interpreter, to the Porte between 1661 and 1673. His successor was Alexandros Mavrocordatos who occupied the position until 1709.⁴⁶ Indeed, the post of Grand Dragoman was monopolized by the Phanariots until 1821. The Phanariots' support of the Church of

⁴⁴ D. Simonescu, E. Muracade, 'Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea' in *Cercetări literare publicate de N. Cariojan*, III, Bucharest, 1939, pp. 1-32.

⁴⁵ D. Dumitrescu, 'Activitatea tipografică a lui Mihail Ștefan în Gruzia' (*Studii*, no. 4, Bucharest, 1958, pp. 135-38).

⁴⁶ N. Camariano, *Alexandre Mavrocordato, le Grand Drogman: son activité diplomatique, 1673-1709*, Thessaloniki, 1970.

Constantinople,⁴⁷ of the academy of the patriarchate there, and their devotion to Greek culture ensured that the legacy of Byzantium was not forgotten among educated Christians in the Balkans. With their accession in the Rumanian principalities (in Moldavia in 1709, in Wallachia in 1716) two powerful agents of Hellenism, or what has also been called neo-Byzantinism, and Byzantine Hellenism now coalesced. For over a century the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia were appointed from eleven Phanariot families.⁴⁸ The first Greek Prince of Moldavia was Nicolaos Mavrocordatos, son of Alexandros, who was appointed in 1709 and again in 1711; in 1716 he moved to the throne of Wallachia. During the Phanariot era the dominance of the Greek language and culture was never threatened. Greek, of course, was the native language of the princes and of the retinues that accompanied them from Constantinople. The children of the hospodar and of his entourage received their education at home, a practice aped by the principal boyars who often engaged Greek priests as private teachers.⁴⁹ Greek schools were established in provincial towns in the principalities and often provided pupils for the academies of Bucharest and Iași. The earliest of these was probably that founded at Buzău in 1725 by the same Mavrocordatos, Prince of Wallachia for a second time from 1719 to 1730.⁵⁰ Others existed at Rîmnici Vîlcea, Craiova and in Moldavia, at Botoșani, and were frequented by sons of merchants and artisans. Indeed, a large Greek merchant community with its centre in Bucharest flourished in the principalities and in Transylvania.⁵¹ Trading firms, often composed of members of the same family, conducted business within Moldavia and Wallachia as well as in the principal commercial centres of Central and Eastern Europe. Greek merchants brought to Bucharest during the latter part of the eighteenth century the Greek newspapers and literature published in Vienna, together with news of events in Western Europe.⁵²

⁴⁷ The political and financial hold of the Phanariots on the patriarchate of Constantinople is mentioned by Cyril Mango, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴⁸ The eleven families were (Rumanian forms in parentheses): Mavrocordatos (Mavrocordat), Racovitza (Racoviță), Ghika (Ghica), Rossetti (Ruset), Ypsilantis (Ipsilanti), Karatzas (Caragea), Soutzos (Suțu), Mavroyenis (Mavrogheni), Mourouzis (Moruzi), Khantzeris (Hangerliu) and Callimachi (Callimachi). These families made mythical claims to aristocratic Byzantine lineage but the Ghikas, for example, were a Hellenized Albanian family while the Callimachis originated from Bukovina.

⁴⁹ W. Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*, London, 1820, p. 130.

⁵⁰ A. Camariano-Cioran, 'Écoles grecques dans les principautés danubiennes au temps des Phanariotes', in *Symposium L'Époque Phanariote ...*, 21-25 octobre 1970, Thessaloniki, 1974, p. 50.

⁵¹ A Greek merchant company was established at Sibiu in 1636: see N. Camariano, 'L'Organisation et l'activité culturelle de la compagnie des marchands grecs de Sibiu' (*Balkanica*, vi, Bucharest, 1943, pp. 201-41).

⁵² It was from the Greeks in the principalities, and frequently from amongst the ranks of failed merchants or bankrupts, that a large proportion of the membership of the

The Phanariots continued their patronage of the church and education as hospodars. The Monastery of St John the Theologian on the island of Patmos was particularly favoured with donations from Michael Soutzos, Prince of Wallachia from 1783 to 1786.⁵³ Other princes frequently made generous benefactions to the Church in the principalities in the form of money, lands, or plate. The Greek academies in Bucharest and Iași were reorganized, the former in 1776 by Prince Alexandros Ypsilantis who introduced rudimentary science into the curriculum. The academies attracted students from afar, their prestige being enhanced by the appointment of several distinguished teachers such as Lambros Photiades, director of the Bucharest Academy (1792–1805). However, outside the academies the standard of teaching seems to have been very poor. Andreas Wolff, a Saxon doctor from Sibiu, said of the Greek teachers in Iași in 1796: 'It is difficult to find one or two who can read profitably, let alone comment on, ancient Greek authors.'⁵⁴ Raicevich, the Austrian minister in Bucharest between 1782 and 1787 was more precise: 'The Greek teachers of today are generally speaking very ignorant. They do nothing more than spend their whole lives dealing with grammatical points and are completely devoid of any hint of learning, literature, or good taste.'⁵⁵

The cultural activity of this period, which has led most Greek scholars to claim that the Phanariots, on the one hand, helped to civilize the native population of the principalities, and, on the other, promoted the regeneration of the Greek people,⁵⁶ should not be allowed to obscure the less altruistic aspect of Phanariot rule. The fertile provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia offered considerable opportunities for personal gain to the hospodar and his entourage. The profit to be made as a holder of office led to much competition amongst the Phanariots for appointment as prince and in consequence tenure was brief.⁵⁷ According to William Wilkinson, British consul at Bucharest from 1814 to 1818, the private income of the Prince of Wallachia was about two million piastres (about £70,000 in 1820), while Ioannes Karatzas, prince from 1812 to 1818, is

Philiki Etairia, the secret revolutionary society founded in Odessa in 1814, was drawn: see G. D. Frangos, 'The Philiki Etairia: A Premature National Coalition', in *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, ed. by R. Clogg, London, 1973, p. 94 and *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770–1821*, ed. and trans. by R. Clogg, London, 1976, p. xvii.

⁵³ M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidis, 'Actes des princes phanariotes en faveur du couvent de Patmos' in *Symposium L'Époque Phanariote* . . . , pp. 419–37.

⁵⁴ L. Șăineanu, *Istoria filologiei române*, Bucharest, 1895, pp. 81–82.

⁵⁵ Raicevich, *Osservazioni storiche, naturali e politiche intorno la Valachia e Moldavia*, Naples, 1788, p. 243.

⁵⁶ C. Mango, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁵⁷ Between 1709 and 1821 there were thirty-seven changes of prince in Moldavia, and between 1716 and 1821 thirty-eight in Wallachia.

said to have amassed eighty or ninety million piastres, a figure that appears exaggerated.⁵⁸ The hospodars came with their relatives and creditors whom they appointed to high offices which automatically conferred the rank of boyar and from which they in turn made their own fortunes. Only the prince could admit to the boyar class and this right constituted an important source of income for him. The metropolitan and diocesan sees were also in the gift of the prince and each prince, when appointed, demanded a payment from the existing metropolitan. This system of corruption and exploitation was condemned even by fellow-Greeks such as the historians Athanasios Ypsilantis and Konstantinos Dapontes⁵⁹ and has often earned the Phanariots the epithet 'Byzantine' when used in a pejorative manner. Can it therefore be said that the Phanariots represent a tradition that is Byzantine in the normal sense of that adjective? Their preferred literature has, as Cyril Mango has shown, a pronounced Byzantine character. Among the favourite works of Dapontes were the Akathistos hymn, the Exposition of the Liturgy by Nicholas Cabasilas, and the seven prayers to the Virgin.⁶⁰ The literature of the Phanariot era included chronicles, epigrams, anacreontic verse, textbooks and theological works.⁶¹ To the Phanariots the world meant the Orthodox world with its centre in Constantinople, and visions of a new Byzantine Empire were ever vivid. Messianic beliefs foretelling the liberation of the Greeks from the Ottoman yoke circulated widely and influenced both the educated and uneducated. The historian Dapontes, who served as secretary to Konstantinos Mavrocordatos (prince in turn of Moldavia and Wallachia), saw in Bucharest in 1738 a vision of the double-headed eagle wearing the imperial crown (such an eagle was the emblem of the Byzantine Empire and, as it happened, also of the Russian Empire).⁶² But such hopes were to be disappointed. At the same time new influences were beginning to be felt among educated Greeks, in particular that of the Enlightenment.

⁵⁸ W. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 68, 122, 206.

⁵⁹ C. Mango, op. cit., p. 43. The strongest critic of the Phanariot regime was a Roman Catholic Greek Mark-Philip Zallony whose *Essai sur les Phanariotes*, published at Marseilles in 1824, was the principal work of reference for most historians writing on the Phanariot regime during the last century: see, for example, M. Kogălniceanu's *Histoire de la Dacie, des Valaques transdanubiens et de la Valachie*, Berlin, 1854. A reappraisal of the Phanariots was made by N. Iorga in his *România şi grecii de-a lungul veacurilor*, Bucharest, 1921.

⁶⁰ C. Mango, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶¹ Several of these works were published at Bucharest, e.g. A. Mavrocordatos, *Istoria iera itoi ta Ioudaika*, written in the style of a Byzantine chronograph, in 1716: see I. Bianu, N. Hodoş, *Bibliografia românească veche 1508-1830*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 1903, pp. 509-12; N. Mavrocordatos, *Peri Kathikonton* (Concerning Obligations) in 1719: see Bianu, Hodoş, vol. II, pp. 1-2; C. Emborokomitos, *Egheiridion peri tis ekporeuseos tou hagiou Pneumatos* (Manual on the procedure of the Holy Spirit) in 1728: see Bianu, Hodoş, op. cit., vol. II, p. 35.

⁶² C. Mango, op. cit., p. 53.

Although the Phanariots, because of their position in the Ottoman hierarchy and their patronage of the Orthodox Church, represented a Byzantine tradition, they had, nevertheless, become an anachronism in the Principalities. With the development of a Rumanian national consciousness the Phanariots found themselves serving Greek interests that could not be identified with Rumanian aspirations. The revolt of 1821 in the principalities, inaugurated by the son of a former Phanariot prince, provides conclusive proof. The Phanariot princes left the stage of the principalities in that year, but the Byzantine tradition lived on.⁶³

⁶³ A useful bibliography for relations between Byzantium and the Rumanian lands is to be found in A. Elian, 'Les Rapports byzantinoroumains' (*Byzantinoslavica*, xix (1958), Prague, 1958, pp. 212-25); id., 'Moldova și Bizațul în secolul al XV-lea', *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, Bucharest, 1964, pp. 97-179; id., 'Byzance et les Roumains à la fin du Moyen Age', *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, Oxford, 1967, pp. 195-203.